

Faithful Account

Of the MANNER of the ELECTION

Sir WILLIAM POULTNEY,

AND

Sir WILLIAM WALLER, Knights,

To serve as Members of the ensuing Parliament at Oxford, for
the City of Westminster, and the Liberties thereof, upon Thursday the
10th of February, 1681.

In Answer to a Letter from a Person of Quality in London.

Worthy Sir!

I Perceive your Curiosity will not acquiesce in the General report of the issue of this days work, unless you receive also satisfaction in the lesser circumstances; and more minute occurrences of the whole affair: I confess my self no great Friend to the Curious Humour, and do chuse commonly to disoblige, rather than gratifie a nice Inquisitiveness into the small punctilias of great Actions; and yet because your Importunity must needs proceed from some private Reasons, where, with I am not acquainted, which will justify your earnestness to your self, I shall Interpret your Desires to be Commands; and Commands according to the Modern Divinity, are to be obeyed, not disputed.

I have now beheld in no more than two years, no less than three Elections of Burgesses for this place, to the great satisfaction no doubt of the people, who delight in frequent Parliaments; and it's scarce credible how much the temper and Genius of the Electors here in this last, is altered from what it was in the two former Elections. Then we had nothing but indecent Heats and Animosities, now nothing appear'd but Unanimity, and an Amicable concurrence amongst us: Formerly the differences produced such bitter reflections, such heart-burnings, as either flamed out in Revenge, or inwardly smothered in secret grudgings against their Neighbours; but this day has healed, united, and so compos'd those contentions, that the filthy dirt which each party threw in the others face, was now wholly under our feet; and that fire which broke out in open revilings, did now only serve to warm mutual affections; whereof I shall need to give you no other Demonstration, than this, That whereas the last Election cost us seven or eight days tedious attendance upon an irregular and ill-governed Poll; this was now dispatcht in less than half as many hours; so facile are matters of the greatest difficulty to united counsels and affections.

If you demand the visible Reasons of this happy change in the tempers and dispositions of so vast and numerous a body; you must content your self with the following account; and accept what I have here assign'd, till you receive fuller satisfaction.

And first I observe, and observe it with joy, as a good Indication and Crisis, that the whole Body-politick will recover its healthful constitution; that most people have their eyes opened, and are made apprehensive, that there's no expedient can secure us from the eminent danger which from our inveterate Popish Enemies hangs over our heads, but by fixing upon such persons, as out of principle and conscience will stand in the gap, and waving their private and personal interests, neglecting their immediate dependences, espouse the publick welfare, and stand or fall with it. And indeed the late Parliament has so abundantly convinced us, that there hath been, and still is carried on a Horrid and Devilish Plot both in England and Ireland against His Majesties Royal Person, the Protestant Religion, and

the Establish'd Government of the Realm, that we cannot but see it high time for all Protestants to unite their strength against the daring encroachments of the common enemy, who now pluck up the Mask, and are ready to defie the Justice of the Nation. For we have seen the Master-piece of Romish policy to lie in this, to Divide us, that they may destroy us; and whilst they are committing one part of Protestants to fight the other, they wait the good hour (and the worst hour is always the best for a bad design) when they may triumph over both; And the more discerning (I had almost said the least discerning) part of mankind are now clearly satisfied, that it's not the Protestant Religion as engross'd and monopolized by any single Party, but as it is in its due latitude including all that are sober in their lives, loyal in their behaviours, and found in the fundamentals of faith, wherein we must center, and arrive at a desired settlement; and accordingly our Interest lies in chusing such persons as may secure the main, and indulge the rest, though perhaps differing among themselves, and all of them coming short in some notions and practises of what carries the publick encouragement and reward: We cannot but be sensible how the enemy, whilst we slept, has sown the Tares of jealousies, suspicions, and mutual distrust amongst sincere, and otherwise knowing Protestants; whereby as if they had been two distinct and separate Interests, they have been myning and countermining each other, accounting themselves to have gained what the other party lost, and to have made so much addition to their own, as they could withdraw from the strength of the other: Whereas Time, the Mother of Truth has taught them at last (I hope not too late) that the strength of the Protestants lies in their uniting and associating against the Declared publick enemy: I may add, and I shall add no more, That experience has taught us how much we may be deceived in Men; how we have been too prone to censure some worthy persons as affected to the Popish, or not zealously affected to the Protestant Cause, who yet upon tryal have given us cause to retract our former judgments of them with shame, and to entertain more righteous thoughts of them for the future.

But, Sir! I shall no further pursue these speculations, but proceed to matter of fact, and give you the Narrative of our Election at *Westminster*, with all the circumstances that may deserve your notice, or answer your expectations.

Be pleased therefore to know, that Sir *William Poultny*, and Sir *William Waller*, who in former Elections were the grand Competitors, and whose Interests were most considerable amongst us, partly through their own generous Inclinations and Propensions to unite for the general good, and partly by the Interposition of judicious and discreet persons, who plainly saw that the former Separation of two such Worthy Partis, had begot much ill blood, were induced to unite and joyn their Interests; which Union was no sooner known, and known to be real and cordial; whereof our old Inveterate jealousies would hardly suffer us to be secure; but to the wonder of all, the envy and regret of some, and the great joy of all considering persons, the hearts of all sober and well-advised persons were knit together.

Upon *Thursday* therefore, the 10th of this instant *February*, several Gentlemen, and other persons of good repute and quality in this City, and the Liberties, attended these two Worthy Knights at their houses early in the morning, to conduct them to the respective Stations; which they had agreed upon, there to gather up their friends, who should be ready and willing to accompany them into the Field. Sir *William Poultny* had designed *St. James his Square*, and Sir *William Waller*, *Covent-Garden*, to which places resorted to attend them, all such whom either Neighbourhood, or Relation, &c. particular affection, or some other private Motives invited to adjoyn themselves to their Approved Friend. At an assigned time, the former of these Gentlemen marching down the *Pall-Mall*, in excellent order, fell in with Sir *William Waller*, and his Company, who came down the *Strand* with like order and decency; and at *Charing-cross* both these Candidates joyned their Retinues: And to witness to all the spectators, who from the Windows, Balconies, and other places of prospect, in great Numbers waited to behold this happy Conjunction, the two Knights drawing near to each other, gave and received such salutes, as expressed the mutual satisfaction of each in other, seconded by the joyful Acclamations of their following friends, who were now no longer separated, but one united body, as formerly they had been in the same principles, the same zeal for the Protestant Interest.

Immediately after this Coalition they marched on; Sir *William Poultny*, as the elder person, and Knight, having the right hand, it being indifferent to wise persons who enjoy'd that circumstantial priority, since both were equal in the hearts of the people.

In this comely order they proceeded by *Whitehall*, and the Horse-guards, without making any stay there, where they expected not to encrease their Numbers. From thence through *King-street*, and the Intermediate passes unto *Turtle-Fields*, the place appointed for the view; where notwithstanding the coldness of the weather, the exceeding high winds, and the violent driving rain, appeared a body of Men, judg'd by the most modest Compute to be between Two and three thousand.

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The two Knights at the Head of their Company, many whereof were on horse-back, but the far greater Number on foot, did there patiently attend the Coming of the Deputy-Bailiff to do his Office; whose Province was very easie at this time, and might soon make a judgment which was the greatest Party upon the first view, when there was but one party, that my poor eyes could then discern in the Field.

The Precept was no sooner openly read by the Bailiff at the Head of the Company, when one Mr. Tuffon makes Application to him, and Demands the Poll on his own behalf, and those that were with him; and indeed it was a claim both too reasonable to be denied, and too rash to have been made; but the Bailiff consulted the duty of his place, and his demand was immediately granted.

The great Discourse that employ'd all Tongues how was, upon what Motives and Encouragements, with what hopes and expectations of success this Gentleman, with his almost invisible party should demand a Poll against so many thousands as appeared actually in the Field, and double that Number, whom the unseasonable weather discouraged from appearing: for some are positive, that half a dozen horse, and about half a score on foot were all that he could Muster; though some, who consult his credit, do aver, that he had upon the place half a score horse, and double the Number of foot followers: and some will not stick to say, that one half of this body were House-keepers, and such as might have made the Majority of Electors at Old Sarum.

Whether it was that he was spur'd on by the Heroick principles of Knight errantry, and presumed that with his select number of Fayrie Knights he should Encounter a Legion of the Pagan-Infantry; or whether some Magastrological, Magomantical Figure-singer had assured him that all the Stars unanimously would Vote for him, and that at least all those of our Hemisphere would come down and abet his party; or that being in love with himself, he conceived upon his first appearance the Majority of the Electors would tack about and adhere to him; or whether some of his witty Associates had bubbled him into a conceit, that every one of his Company had the priviledg of a hundred Voices, as some boasted, that at the last Elections they had had more heads and voices than Gorgon and Cerberus; whether it were these, or some of these, or other more dormant Reasons that sway'd with him, 'tis uncertain; yet certain it is, he peremptorily insisterh upon his Right to have a free Poll, nor could the most ingenious applications of divers worthy persons dissuade him; but though it was represented to him as folly to contend with so great and disproportionate a multitude; and as disingenuous to create a needless trouble to his neighbours; and as a disparagement to himself to have it upon record that he had no more friends; yet still he remained unmovable, and that obstinacy in a bad cause might have the face of perseverance in a good one; he asserted his right to have a fair and free Poll, and in short he had it: It was considered that the Term not being ended, there could be no Vacation in Westminster-hall, all the Courts being taken up by the Judges, every Bench filled, except the Kings-Bench, where by the Absence of the Lord Chief Justice Scroggs, there was a vacant place, but not room enough for a Poll; and therefore the Bride-well for the Parish of St. Margarets was agreed on, not as a place of choice and conveniency, but such as the Inexorable law of Necessity impos'd on them.

The Poll had not continued long, but Mr. Tuffons adherents began to come in very thin, till in a while his own ingenuity began to rebel against his former resolution; and seeing his cause desperate, which 'tis a wonder he could not see before, he threw it up as lost, and leaving about 20 Men upon Record for having no more brains, he prudently founded a retreat, and with three whole horse-men quitted the service, being followed down the street with the Valedictory shouts of the people at his heels, which he perhaps will interpret to have been honourable applauses, but others upon better grounds judge were the Marks of Derision.

The business being now so exceeding clear, the Poll soon sm'd up (for Mr. Tuffons short Horses were soon curried), the Bayliff, with the two elected Knights at the Head of their Triumphant party, march'd fair and softly into the New Palace-yard, where at Westminster-Hall Gate (the Courts of Chancery, Kings-Bench, Common-Plas, and Exchequer, all sitting) open Proclamation was made, that Sir William Poultney, and Sir William Waller were duly Elected for Burgeses to serve in the Approaching Parliament for the City of Westminster, and the Liberties thereof, which was followed with the loud Applauses and Acclamations of the whole Company.

There was it seems a Paper handed in the Crowd from one to another, till at last it came to the hands of Mr. Thomas Owen, a person of great worth; who looking upon it, asked what was their pleasure he should do with it? who signified by signs and expressions, that he would give himself the trouble to read it: He consented, and finding it an Address of the Electors to their New elected Representatives, demanded of the People whether he should, according to the Tenour of the Paper, present it to those Honoured persons, their present Burgeses; which by lifting up their hands, and great shouts they approved of; and in pursuance of their desires he presented it to them, in these following words. M O O V O A

To the Honour'd Sir William Poulney, and Sir William Waller, Knights, Unanimously Elected as Members of the ensuing Parliament, for the Ancient City of Westminster.

WHE the Inhabitants of this City, and the Liberties thereof here assembled, retaining a most grateful and indelible sense of your prudent zeal in the late Parliament, in searching into the depth of the horrid and hellish Plots of the Rapists, against his Majesty's Royal Person, the Protestant Religion, and the Government of the Realm; and in bringing the Authors of the said wicked counsels to condign punishment. And remembering also your faithful discharge of that great trust reposed in you, in vindicating our undoubted Right of Petitioning his Majesty, that Parliament may sit for the Redress of our Grievances; which hereditary Privilege, some bad men would have wrested out of our hands, upon whom you have set such a just brand of Ignominy, as way does them from the like attempts for the time to come. And further reflecting seriously upon your vigorous endeavours, to secure to us, and our posterity, the profession of the true Religion by these just, legal and necessary expedients which the great Wisdom of the two last Parliaments fixed upon, and adhered to; Do find our selves obliged to make our open acknowledgment of, and to return our hearty thanks for your eminent integrity and faithfulness, your indefatigable labour, and pains in the Premises: Not once questioning but you will maintain the same good spirit and zeal to secure his Majesty's Royal Person, and to preserve to us the Protestant Religion (wherein all good Subjects have an interest) against the subtle and secret contrivances, and open assaults of the Common enemy; as also our Civil Rights and Properties against the encroachments of Arbitrary Power. In pursuance of which great and good ends, we shall always be ready, as we are obliged, to adhere to you, our Honour'd Representatives, with the utmost hazard of our Persons and Estates.

This Address being thus presented, and accepted, Sir William Poulney in his own, and the Name of his Colleague, Sir William Waller, made a short, but pithy Return, in these words,

Gentlemen!

IT may be expected We should say something to you in answer to your Paper, which contains, first your Kindness, and secondly your Instructions to us.

As for your Kindness, give us leave to say, that we are very much oblig'd to you for your good Opinion of our Endeavours to serve you in the last Parliament, which is best testified by your Repeated Favour, in freely Chusing us again to serve you in this ensuing one.

As for the Instructions which you have given us, they are many, great and weighty, and which (as we conceive) may conduce very much to the preservation of the Peace and Quiet of this Nation; but being of so high Importance, we can at the present give no other answer to them, than that we shall duly consider them; and all other such Instructions as we shall at any other time receive from you, conducing to the preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government, the Security of the true Protestant Religion, and our Laws and Liberties. To which end we do heartily wish, and we shall use our utmost endeavours to maintain a happy Union betwixt the King and his Parliament, as also a Union amongst all his Majesty's Protestant Subjects, the best means to secure our Religion, Laws and Liberties against the Inroachments of Popery and Arbitrary Power, and we hope we shall never live to see a Popish Successor.

All this was accompanied with repeated Acclamations and Testimonies of great satisfaction; the two New elected Burgesses were conducted to their several habitations, when first the usual Indentures had been sealed; and Sir William Waller at the departure of his friends expressed him to them, to the same purport with the Speech of Sir William Poulney.

And now, Honour'd Sir, I hope I have satisfied, and I fear glutted your curiosity in all the Niceties of this Election, and shall only observe to you, that in the whole management of this affair the Inhabitants did not put their designed Representatives to the least expence: The people did not here sell their Votes and Souls for treats and wine; nor was there any here that would have purchas'd such Votes, if there had any been found to expose them to sale; for we know well, that they who buy our Votes, will sell their own; and reimburse themselves upon our Estates, if we should put them to charge upon our Carcasses. We hope also you will observe how unanimous this City and yours have been in their zeal for the Kings Person and Protestant Religion; what remains, but I beg your pardon for the length of this Narrative, whose truth needs no Indulgence, and that I subscribe,

S^r I R,

Tours to be Commanded,

L. S.